

## **GOD'S PRINCIPLES OF MINISTRY**

One thing I have learned about how God establishes ministers and ministries is that there is a 3-step process: GOD calls, GOD equips, and GOD sends. Ministry is God's method of accomplishing his will and purposes in the world.

If people are in a ministry, and I don't discern God's call to, and presence in, that ministry, I part company as soon as possible. Sometimes, however, it takes time to fully discern this. For example, we spent over a year one time with someone who thought he was a pastor. Indeed, he was holding that position. He was listed as the Senior Pastor, even though there was no other pastor! God assigned us to mentor him, and he knew it. He was happy and thankful at first because he was young and had never been a pastor. He hadn't even been an assistant or associate pastor! Unfortunately, he wasn't teachable, and before long he was no longer interested in being mentored, though he continued to pastor.

It had become evident, as we tried to work with him, that God had not called him to be a pastor. However, his salary was good and secure, and he had a family to support. Neither of these is a good enough reason to be in ministry. His people cried out for him to "preach the Word." No message to him from the Lord ever came forth. I thought that what was what those in ministry were supposed to do! Instead, he preached other's books for two or three weeks at a time. Pride of Position too often substitutes for God's call. We left his church.

Some people are called by God but are not sufficiently trained or equipped beyond, perhaps, a bible correspondence study or some seminary or bible school training. They have little or no concept of their role as a leader but would probably be open to training or mentoring if it were available to them.

I sure didn't know much about leadership, either, but when my wife said, "If you don't do it, I guess it won't get done," I decided I'd better find out what my role in the family was all about. Since effective leadership in the family is usually a prerequisite for leadership in the Church, in most cases, pastoral leaders need to be sure that they have their homes in order or that they get some help. That is why I believe that family and pastoral leadership development are so important and why I am committed to both through the retreats and seminars I offer.

Finally, some people establish or send themselves before God is ready. God's timing is critical. I learned a long time ago that WAIT is God's four-letter word! I have waited many times over the years. I made most of my worst mistakes when I moved ahead of God. Even when God moves for a period of time, he may have you wait again before moving to the next stage of what he wants you to do. There may be some additional preparation or equipping of you that he needs to do in you. We need to remember that God is the leader and we are to follow. He will establish or send us at the time he determines to be best. We are to be like the player on the bench who knows how to play his position but who needs to wait for the Coach to send him in at the right time.

I know that God has called me because he has verified it. I remember one time in particular when I was going through one of those periods of doubt and questioning that we sometimes experience. I asked God to make it so clear that he had called me and that I was where I was supposed to be that I would never doubt it again. I figured that sometime he would answer me, but I didn't know when. Immediately, came so clear, though not in an audible voice, "You have my word." I have never doubted my call since. Now I know that he has been equipping me so that I can equip others.]

All that he has taught me to share with the Church is contained in my books. Nothing that I have written there, or currently teach, comes directly out of my theological training. It has come from a totally committed walk with the Lord and a lot of time listening to his direction. I am constantly amazed at what shows up in my writings. It has to come from him. I'm not that wise or smart! He is truly a faithful God, who speaks to and through me in ways that I could never imagine.

I set out with my family in January of 1981 on an "Abraham journey", totally by faith. It has been quite an adventure. All of my books have come from that experience, though I am far from where I need to be. Fortunately, God doesn't expect perfection, just trust and obedience. He will let you share what you have learned at each stage of your journey with him. Like the old children's song says, "Trust and obey, for there's no better way to be happy with Jesus than to trust and obey." Obedience is the proof of your faith and trust.

I believe that God has now called Penny and me out to complete what he has called us to do: to call individuals, families, and faith communities *into* his order and to establish them *in* his order. That is the whole purpose of this website and of our resources. We trust God to open the doors he wants for us to go through. Until then, we WAIT.

--Patrick Hession